

# OpeningREMARKS

## INFLUENTIAL TIMES

AS THUNDERHEADS BUILD IN THE SKY OUTSIDE MY OFFICE WINDOW ON A sweltering summer day, my mind wanders to the past. There are thoughts of pickup baseball games played decades ago with friends beneath similar skies. We'd roust up kids from around the village and meet at the Little League field. Some days, there were enough of us to fill every position; other days, there'd only be a few to a side and we'd invoke the pitcher's-mound-is-first-base rule. We played for hours under the hot sun, taking breaks to slurp and splash water from the faucet that stood next to the gravel road leading to the field. Sooner or later, someone would get tired or have to leave and the teams would be reshuffled or the game would break up; another day, another game.

For me, these games reinforced my love for baseball: The game moves at its own pace, oblivious to the constraints of time. It requires patience and the attentiveness of immersing yourself in the moment, no matter how boring or dramatic the possibility. Baseball also tenders resiliency, always offering the opportunity of a comeback because, as Yogi Berra once said, "It ain't over 'til it's over." This all came to mind as I read "Syracuse and a Civil War Masterpiece," a feature by Rick Burton '80, the David B. Falk Professor of Sport Management, who researched Stephen Crane's one-semester stint at SU in 1891 and how it may have influenced the novelist in writing *The Red Badge of Courage*. We cannot know the definitive role Syracuse played in Crane's life, but we do know that, as a 19-year-old, he had an insatiable passion for baseball—and Syracuse helped him satisfy that craving.

More than a century of students has passed through campus since Crane's time, and SU has influenced the lives of many of them in many ways. Syracuse—the University and the city—continues to evolve, creating individual and collective experiences from which students learn and benefit. For some, Syracuse becomes a place to settle and grow; for others, Syracuse becomes a place of fond memories where they explored interests, developed lifelong expertise, made friends, and discovered who they are and what they would do with their lives. Looking through these pages, you will find examples of these personal milestones again and again. And, thinking ahead to fall on a broiling-hot summer day, I wonder about the new and returning students and how they will put their Syracuse experiences to use one day, making their marks on the world in their own individual ways.



JAY COX  
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